A Proposal for a 3/2 Dual-degree Program with Columbia University

Proposal

As the engineering advisor, I propose that Colby allow students to pursue the Columbia program under a 3/2 model (3 years at Colby/2 years at Columbia). This would make the program more attractive to a much larger segment of students, provide additional capacity for students who wish to pursue a dual degree in engineering, and provide additional options for students who wish to study a specific field of engineering not offered at Dartmouth (our other dual degree partner).

Unlike the 2-1-1-1 model with Dartmouth or the existing 4/2 model with Columbia, a 3/2 model requires Colby to waive the requirement that a student be in residence at Colby for their final semester.

A much deeper role for the engineering advisor would be necessary with this program, as an early and consistent advice protocol will be required for students to navigate the preparatory course work.

Motion

A student may enroll in the Columbia Combined Plan program under a 3/2 model if the student has successfully completed the following by the end of six semesters and obtains admission to the program. The final semester residency requirement is waived.

- The student has completed 90 credits towards graduation.
- The student has satisfied the foreign language requirement.
- The student has completed all distribution requirements.
- The student has successfully completed two January terms.
- The student has completed all major requirements, with any exceptions approved by the major department.

Students enrolled in the Columbia Combined Plan will receive their Colby degree upon completion of all Colby graduation requirements and completion of the Columbia Engineering Program.
Background

Pursuing a dual-degree program that combines a Colby B.A. with a Dartmouth B.E. has been popular with students for many years. Unlike most schools with dual-degree programs, Colby regularly sends 8-10 students to Dartmouth. In some years, over half of the students attending the Dartmouth dual-degree program have been Colby students. This opportunity draws excellent students to Colby, and they have been successful after graduation. Their combination of liberal arts and engineering makes them highly sought after and well-positioned to be leaders in engineering and the development and use of new technology.

Admission into the Dartmouth program is competitive. Over the past decade, most Colby students who applied have been accepted into the program, and in some years Dartmouth has taken extraordinary measures to accept Colby students when there is a large pool of qualified applicants. Note that there is a good amount of self-selection in which students apply, so most Dartmouth applicants have an overall GPA of 3.5 or higher after three semesters.

While Dartmouth has traditionally accepted almost all Colby students who apply, Dartmouth and other dual-degree programs are seeing a rise in interest. Last year, Colby sent fewer students to Dartmouth than at least one other school, and this year many schools have a large number of applicants. As a result, the percentage of Colby applicants accepted to the program is lower than it has been in the past, meaning qualified students are being denied the opportunity to pursue the Dartmouth dual-degree program.

Colby also has a 4/2 program with Columbia. Unlike Dartmouth, the Columbia program offers guaranteed admission for students who meet a GPA of 3.3 and a minimum B grade in all of their pre-engineering courses. It also has a greater capacity to handle additional dual-degree students. Students unable to pursue a dual-degree at Dartmouth could choose to take six years and pursue the existing 4/2 program with Columbia, but that is a costly option both in time and money.

Most schools that partner with Columbia follow a 3/2 model for the program. Colby follows a 4/2 model because Columbia was not willing to follow the 2-1-1-1 model we have with Dartmouth, and Colby has not, to this point, decided to allow a 3/2 model for our students.